Utah State Office of Education Guidelines for School Attendance

The Utah State Board of Education views attendance as a critical element within the school system. The opportunities lost through student absence cannot be fully secured through other means. For this reason, parents, students, and school personnel are to avoid decisions that lead to classroom absenteeism.

During annual review of school district attendance policies, the following guidelines should be addressed:

- Parents/patrons and students should be involved in policy development.
- Teachers should be encouraged to consider attendance as part of classroom-level grading strategies, where appropriate, that are shared regularly with parents and students.
- District policy should emphasize student achievement in an optimal learning environment, fostering lifelong habits of accountability and reliability.
- School personnel should resist scheduling school activities that remove students from classrooms.
- Parents should excuse students only for reasons identified by the school or district as reasonable such as:
 - o illness
 - medical appointments
 - family emergencies
 - death of family member or close friend
 - o family activity or travel consistent with district/school policy
- Procedures should be in place to help students compensate for loss of instruction.
- Clearly defined and effective interventions should be specified for excessive absenteeism.
- Expectations and consequences of school absence should be shared effectively with parents and students at least annually.
- A clear-cut process for absence review should be in place.
- Upon student transfer, a system should be in place to transmit attendance records to receiving school.

The Utah State Board of Education and Utah State Office of Education provide these guidelines to districts, schools, teachers, parents, students, and patrons regarding attendance within the Utah system of public education. Autonomy for development and maintenance of attendance policies and procedures lies with local districts and individual schools.